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The Passing of the Village

FRANCES M. MILNE

SAN LUIS OBISPO, MARCH, 1901

Presented to the Library
of the University of California
With regards of
Dennis T. Mahoney

San Luis Obispo
April 24-1907

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MAIN

It was folded away from strife,
  In the beautiful pastoral hills;
And the mountain peaks kept watch and ward
  O'er the peace that the valley fills—
Kept watch and ward lest the bold world pass
  The fair green rampart of hills.

No factory din profaned
  The joy of the summer morn;
But the tinkle of bells from the pasture-slope,
  And the rustle of waving corn,
And the wreathing smoke from the cottage
    hearth,
  Saluted the rising morn.

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The rains of the winter fell
  In benison on its sod;
And the smiling fields of the spring looked up
  A thanksgiving glad to God;
And the little children laughed to see
  The wild-flowers star the sod.

The opulent Summer came,
  Like a queen, to the vale she loved;
And lavished her gifts with a royal grace
  That never a wish reproved;
Oh, she lingered long, as if loth to leave
  The sunny vale that she loved.

The wains on the highway thronged,
O'er-laden with Autumn's spoil;
Like a train triumphal, from conquest won,
They passed from the fields of toil—
The fields where Labor hath kingly right
To rifle the garnered spoil.

The traffic of simple life
That draws man near to man;
The village street, and the farmstead home—
The tie of a kindred clan;
And the common bond to the "brown old earth,"
The primal strength of man.

"Let not ambition mock"
Such "destiny obscure";
The mighty stream, that a navy bears,
Was fed from the fountain pure
Of a hillside spring that its freshness kept
In the depths of the glade obscure.

* * * * *

Hark! hark! to the thunderous roar!
Like a demon of fable old,
The fiery steed of the rail hath swept
Through the ancient mountain-hold,
And the green hills shudder to feel his breath—
The challenge of New to Old.

But the spirit of man awakes,
And thrills to the larger life;
A force resistless his soul hath claimed,
He is part of the great world-strife!
And far and dim in the distance fades
That first fair dawn of life.

Yet, day of power and pride!
Forget not thou that dawn;
From simple hearts, and from simple homes,
Is the strength of a nation drawn;
And ever the earth her life renews
In the dew and the peace of dawn.

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